



CHILDREN OF THE SHADOW
AND OTHER POEMS

HAROLD SYMMES



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CHILDREN OF THE SHADOW
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BY
HAROLD SYMMES



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CHILDREN OF THE SHADOW

CHILDREN OF THE SHADOW

TO an old embowered garden,
In a sunset-shadowed land,
Comes each eve a lady strolling,
With two lilies in her hand.

Up and down the dim-aisled terrace,
Where great rose vines clamber wild,
Walks the lady of the lilies,
Calling, "Come, dear child, dear child!"

Years and years I've heard her calling,
As a plaint of wilding dove,
Crooning, sighing, soft-imploring,
Full of grief and mother love.

Are they children of the shadow,
Spirits of love's afterglow,
Babes that once slept on her bosom?
None but God shall ever know.

So within life's sunset garden,
Where heart-yearnings blossom wild,
Still a mother love is calling,
Calling, "Come, dear child, dear child!"

TRUANTS

OUT of the womb of the earth,
From a life that is one in all,
We fare alone from our birth,
Lured on by the world-siren call,
We, the sons of the All.

And truants we speedily prove
'Neath the spell of ephemeral gain,
Each man for himself and no love
For the beggar or brother in pain,
We, the descendants of Cain.

Yet, lest we forget our one birth,
Here is death with our names on a scroll,
Who leads us all home to the earth,
To our part in the great living whole,
We, in our essence one soul.

THE BEGGAR

A BEGGAR, gaunt and broken, empty-eyed,
An abject wretch, before the Christ enthroned,
Gazed long upon the Master crucified,
Then dropped upon the altar stair and moaned:
“Oh, to live again!
To live once more in the world of men!
Another life, O Christ, unscarred and new,
Now that I know and have will to do.
Thou knowst my sins, my heedless ways,
My foolish errors, faults, and misspent days,
Mistakes of judgment, acts that stained my youth —
See, each a rent, a mouth uncouth
That mocks with shame from out my garment here.
Have I not paid and paid most dear? —
I, like midget crushed in the mindless dance
Of blind and heartless circumstance.
Is this Thy plan, this endless pain and strife,
To win our wisdom at the price of life
And then but die?
Ah, God, why, *why?*
Show me mercy, pity these repentant tears,
Forget my broken days, my wasted years,
And let me live again!”

CHILDREN OF THE SHADOW

He lay a heap of rags upon the stair,
With anguished sobs his tortured heart was torn.
Then stillness — the awful stillness after prayer,
And from its soundless depths this word was born:
 “Outreach with endless faith thine endless strife,
 Its very endlessness is life.
 Out of thy broken days new life is born,
 Thy need of light shall bring the morn.
 E'en to thy starless midnight gloom
 This life were naught, were death its empty doom.
 Beyond perfection life can never be.
 Behold, thy cry means immortality!”

THE SOUL OF APRIL SINGS

WHITE blossoms star the orange trees,
And their early coming wakes
This drowsy drone of honey bees,
This langorous fragrance on the breeze,
As perfumed wind from purple seas —
The sleep of winter breaks.

The acacia bursts with radiant gold,
And to the rose vine comes
A blossoming so manifold
Its petaled wealth no vine can hold,
It spreads a snowdrift o'er the mold —
The heart of April blooms.

From cedar-top a mocking bird
His rippling love-song flings,
Afar a wild dove's call is heard,
Anear a meadow lark is stirred
To rouse the world with joyous word —
The soul of April sings!

THE TAVERN HOST

WE had journeyed long together,
Failure, Poverty, and I.
They had come, unsought companions,
When my friends all passed me by.

They had met me on life's highway,
Where the blinding dust is deep
And the winding climb toils upward,
Ever steeper and more steep;

Touched their caps and called me comrade,
Said they knew I was a friend,
Asked me why and where I journeyed,
Wished they might assistance lend.

"I seek," I said, "a certain tavern
That is called the Goal of Life.
Oh, I weary of this struggle,
Endless dust and endless strife!"

"Well we know that famous tavern, —
Why, a comrade is its host, —
We know, too, a short road thither.
Trust to us, you'll not be lost."

THE TAVERN HOST

So we three trudged on together,
Side by side we slept at night,
And they left me not a moment
Till the tavern came in sight.

Then they laughed and nudged each other
As they led me to the door
Of a dark and tomb-like cavern,
Where our footsteps on the floor

Echoed like three dead men's voices,
Mocking every act aloud,
Till a chilling terror wrapped me,
Like an icy funeral shroud.

They called the host. He came, stern-visaged.
"Bring us flagons of the best!"
They laughed and told him I would pay him, —
I, his silent, wondering guest.

Much they drank. At last rose Failure,
Shouting through his drunken breath,
"Come, man, fill and drain thy goblet,
Then pay thy score to our host — Death."

At this our strange host hastens forward,
And my friends fall back in fear,
For he stands a Christ transfigured,
And from his lips this word we hear:

CHILDREN OF THE SHADOW

“Thrice fourfold he paid his quittance
Bravely struggling toward my door.
Here he rests an honored pilgrim,
Welcome to its every store.

“Listen! Death is death no longer
Unto those who bear life's strife;
Unto those who meet with Failure,
I am greater. I am LIFE.”

THE BLIND GIRL'S LOVE SONG

HE hath come! hath come!
From outer dark he brings to me
A sense of light that sings to me,
That wraps my soul and clings to me, —
My king hath come.

He hath come! hath come!
From heaven above this boon to me,
A radiant love as June to me,
A silver love as moon to me
In him hath come.

He hath come! hath come!
His voice bounds all the world for me,
His kiss has all unfurled for me
A dawning earth dew-pearled for me,
Till through his love I see! I see!
Love's light hath come!

COMMON CLAY

THE Master placed within my hand
A bit of common clay.
"Of this make thee a life," he said,
"Fashion it night and day."

"But this, O Master, is cold earth,
Insensate dust of death.
For life I need Thy living fire,
The flame of stars, the breath
Of love, of joy, of wild desire,
Those deathless dawns that light
The surgent beauty of the day,
The firmament at night."

"Have faith in common clay," said He,
"A mystic force is thine.
As thou on the world's wheel shape thy clay,
So shall it grow divine."

THE WINGÈD DAWN

THE mighty mountain world lies dark in sleep,
Till Dawn, as some fair angel, wide outflings
The rose-meshed pinions of her silent wings
Along the dreaming east. With gilding sweep
She mounts to heaven's crown; then, bending low,
An angel's crimson-lippèd kiss bestows
Upon earth's mountained brow of gleaming snows,—
A sacramental kiss, for in its glow
And flush of rose lies all the blood and breath
Of Dawn. Below, the earth in slumber seems
To blush and smile, as 'neath the spell of dreams
That lovers have. Above, in silvern death
Dawn slowly dies and folds her wings away.
But earth she kissed to life; for see — 'tis day!

LORD GOD OF MEN

L*ORD God of men, my father's Lord and mine,
Hark to this cry of the broken,
List to the stricken plea
Of one earth-crushed 'neath a burden
Of pain and pain's misery.*

Give back the strength now ebbing,
Give back the old life zest,
The joy of buoyant battle,
The joy of endless quest.

Was youth's exultant vigor,
Youth's promised happiness,
But granted for this ending
Of tears and breathlessness?

Were all my life ambitions
Mirages of the morn?
Were all my friends and friendships
But mocking specters born?

Was love of woman granted
To multiply death's pain? —
Given in perfect glory
To prove all loving vain?

LORD GOD OF MEN

Grant strength, O God, I implore it!

Grant strength to love and live.

Give back the blood of courage

To fight, O Lord, — give, give!

.

Lord God of men, my father's Lord and mine,

Hark not to this cry of me — broken,

But grant me the light to see

That here in Thy gift of this weakness

Is the seed of new strength to me.

THY LIBERATOR, I

Body

“**A** prisoner am I.
No mortal strength on earth can free me,
My past a galling chain of weight,
Each link some fault unfortunate,
Till here in gyves you see me.
In endless thrall dwell I.”

Soul

“Thy liberator, I!
Thy deathless hope, thy deep desire,
Thy will that bursts the binding chain,
Thy faith that, starlike, doth maintain
The heaven’s immortal fire —
The all-transcendent I!”

EVANESCENCE

DRIED are the morn's dew diamonds,
Scattered the petaled rose,
Stilled is the lark's clear music, —
Where is it their spirit goes?

Is it that every glory
Must fade that man may know
A deeper, richer beauty
In memory's afterglow?

WIND AND STARS

FATE came in cloud of crimson flame
And swept my childhood's home from me.
The night my only tent became —
Yet wind and stars did comfort me.

Fate sent a plague and took my strength,
My joyous youth and hope from me;
A stricken exile left at length —
Still, wind and stars did comfort me.

'Neath friendship's mask Fate wooed my love,
Estranged her, heart and soul, from me.
Bereft, alone, still One above
Sends wind and stars to comfort me.

CHILDREN OF HEAVEN

AS spirits of heaven's love, born
Where the sun embosoms the sea,
Bodied as mists of the morn,
And touched with the wind's mystery,

They rise as great birds in their flight,
Now winging aloft as in play,
Now trying their pinions of white, —
These gleaming cloud-children of day.

They drift and they dream o'er the sea,
A fairy-frilled, white-bosomed throng,
Trailing in infantile glee
Their airy toy shadows along.

Over broad valleys they ride,
Over proud cities of men,
Now romping and scattering wide,
Now coming together again.

They cling to the slumbering hills,
They weep o'er a sun-parched plain,
Till every dry creek runnel fills
With the song of their silver rain.

CHILDREN OF THE SHADOW

They smile at the sun of their birth,
As he rides in the high stainless blue,
They bow to the bare-bosomed earth,
And a rainbow arches them through.

On to the pine-purpled heights,
Where forests in loneliness sleep,
Where star armies' shimmering lights
Their faithful night sentinel keep;

On to the Pass of the Peaks,
Fearing the storm's chilling breath,
Huddled, each cloud spirit seeks
Way through to the Desert of Death.

Down over gaunt haggard hills,
Into the desert they crowd, —
That caldron whose flame ever kills,
Whose breath is a fiery shroud.

So melting and fading away,
Fading and dying each one,
Pass slowly these children of day,
Pass back to the soul of the sun.

TO WHAT END?

I

ON drags the wheel of the days,
Idle and tenantless days.
Gray time never varies his ways,
Each day passes just as before,
Slips by like the sun on the floor,
And man bitterly questions, "Wherefore, wherefore?"

Up crawl the life-crushing years,
Aimless and meaningless years,
Darkened by dumb spectral fears
That pain and monotony send
To watch by the bedside as friend,
Till life's misery echoes, "What end, what end?"

II

Fast whirls the wheel of the days,
Busying, dizzying days.
All life is but one blinding blaze,
Each breath is as never before,
Each act warms the heart to the core.
No time to question "Wherefore, wherefore?"

CHILDREN OF THE SHADOW

On whirls man's cycle of years,
Joyous, all-glorious years,
For with them come love and love's tears;
And living and loving now tend
All days, nights, and decades to blend
In one pæan of joy. And yet — to what end?
What end?

THE WORKER

HE closed his eyes and drank life deep,
For him the lees spoiled not the wine.
He asked of God nor seal nor sign,
Content to sow, content to reap,
Without one thought of meed divine.

In sweat of toil he found life's zest,
The moment's work was mastering lord,
The long day's call a two-edged sword
To fight one's way to well-earned rest;
The joy of work was work's reward.

"But why and wherefore? Say, what end
To all thy ceaseless toil? What lies
Before, beyond? Why forge new ties
To earth for Death's fell hand to rend?"
These his fellows' taunting cries.

He pondered long. What *had* God meant?
He never learned. No sage was he
To solve God's deep philosophy.
Once more he toiled in faith content,
And faith dissolved life's mystery.

LOVE'S RHYTHM

BECAUSE your heart went singing,
 Mine sang too;
And straight my life went swinging
To a rhythmic, joyful ringing,
 Because of you.

Because your heart must sorrow,
 I grieve too;
In tears to-day, to-morrow,
A deeper life I borrow,
 Because of you.

Because all love in giving
 Bears love anew,
I greaten in this living
That hymns the one thanksgiving
 Of loving you.

AMOR IMMORTALIS

YEA, Death, thou canst come.
O withering wind of all this earth-born life,
O dreaded night, enwombing all to come,
Dark silent judge of man's rapacious strife,
Of days of toil and joy life's sum —
Yea, Death, thou canst come!

Come,
And take the treasured husk,
This clay so worn and lusk.
One breath and we behold
This life a crumbling mold,
Stilled its every fray.
Thy will no man may stay; —
And yet one law restrains
Thy hand. One truth remains:
I love, am loved. And see
How this love transfigures me!
Greater I am than aught
Thy hand has ever wrought;
Greater, O Death, than thee
Or thy fell destiny.
All else may fade away,
Thy night enshroud the day,
E'en stars and worlds unmake, —
But love thou canst not take.

CHILDREN OF THE SHADOW

O strong-armed reaper of our lesser life,
O cold-lipped giver of all lives to come,
Thou mighty silencer of human strife,
Of earthly gifts alone the sum, —
Yea, Death, thou canst come!

A WOMAN

BY the sorrow in her eyes
That mists her sight,
By the stifled sobs that rise
In the night,
By the quiver of her lips,
Well I know
Life's one joy has seen eclipse
In life's woe.
Yet no sympathy she asks
Nor grieving brings;
Pale, she plies her daily tasks,
And she sings.

SYMPATHY

I LAY on a sufferer's pallet,
Stricken and bruised and worn;
Spirit and flesh were broken,
On wheel of pain were torn.

I faced the murky midnight,
My faith submerged by doubt;
I quailed 'neath endless torture
Till my soul in revolt cried out:

"O God, my God, have mercy,
Make end to this misery!"
And God himself made answer,
"I suffer, too, in thee."

As child at his mother's bosom
Is kissed and pain forgot,
I found in God a father,
And lo, I suffered not.

THE WORLD SPIRIT

I AM the dew and the dust,
I am the dawning day,
I am the seed that must
Bud, blossom, and decay.

I am the wind from the hills,
The light from the evening star,
I am the rain that wills
Green fields where deserts are.

I am the joy that sings
In souls that never part,
I am the grief that wrings
The tears from a mother's heart.

I am the law of the earth,
Its spirit, its life, its breath;
I am the seed of its birth
And the seed of its greater death.

I am the worlds that were
And the worlds that are yet to be;
No force will ever defer
My cosmic destiny.

CHILDREN OF THE SHADOW

Redeeming through love and through strife,
All things in me rehearse.
I am the inner life,
The soul of the universe.

WIND ECHOES

FULL from the gates of the westering day
The wind sings a song of the sea,
Learned where the white-fanged billows play
In restless immensity.

Far on the mountain's precipitous height
The pines feel the breath of the sea,
And sing to the stars of a cloudless night
Their deep ocean harmony.

Had these faltering words but the wings of the wind,
How they'd rise in their flight unto thee!
And, whispering echoes in spirit and kind,
Sing the songs in the heart of me.

THE DESERT SOUL

THE great city babbled its lying word,
His brothers proved thieves, his own sister erred.
Embittered, he turned from its sordid strife,
Agnostic, he cursed them, cursed all life,
And wandered alone to the desert's rim.
Its kingdom of death was a balm to him,
His hatred of life seemed to find its aim
In this heartless, merciless, withering flame.
And there 'neath a limitless, blue burning dome
He built him a hovel and called it home.

Then slowly a change o'er his soul was wrought.
He dwelt there alone, yet alone he was not, —
Some being, some power far greater than he,
Lay hid in this infinite mystery;
And lo, from the depths of that solitude
Was born a new spirit of brotherhood.
He loved its mirages, its quick-shifting sands,
The sun-dying glow o'er the barren lands,
The dawn's saffron fires, the wind storm's mist,
The night's veiling shadows of amethyst.

He felt he was nothing, an atom of soul,
And yet he was part of that living whole.
His breath became one with the desert's breath,

THE DESERT SOUL

A life he attained from this womb of death,
A life that blossomed like Aaron's rod,
For he found here the Infinite, found here his God.
Here, where death reigns 'neath a pitiless sun,
He knew that Life, Death, and God are all one.

FROM THE HILLS OF TOURMALINE

FROM the hills of tourmaline,
Where the skies are sapphire sheen,
Where the earth has piled her treasure —
Bloodstones, beryl without measure,
Turquoise holding heaven's azure,
Hyacinth and emerald green;

From the hills of tourmaline,
Where the days are opaline,
Where the dawn's beams never tire
Of touching all with sunrise fire
To make one gem worth love's desire,
A living soul incarnadine;

From these hills of tourmaline,
Where deep-hued garnets almandine
Dartle rays of beauty fleeting,
All — all these jewels in one thought meeting,
I send you here a lover's greeting, —
From my hills of tourmaline.

THE ROSES OF THY LOVE

GONE are the roses you gave me,
Fallen and withered and dead,
And yet they still live in their message,
Though their color and fragrance are fled.

For while they drooped and were dying,
A sun ray from some heaven came
And touched every rose crimson petal
Till it leapt into rose crimson flame.

E'en so is my gift and the giver
Transfigured, as though from above,
By the light of thy thought and thy bringing,
By the rose crimson flame of thy love.

FROM THE HEART OF A BRETON MOTHER

O THOU treacherous, passionate sea!
Insatiable, hungry-mouthed sea!

Thy thousand tongues calling,
Each wild child enthralling,
Thou hast lured from my arms all my fair and my brave.
Wild treasure tales bringing,
False siren songs singing,
Thou hast borne them away on thy merciless wave.

Thou temptress at suing,
Thou harlot at wooing,
To call one and all to thy bridal-bed grave,
Hath thy heart no compassion
For a soul that is ashen?
Wilt thou hear this mad mother in tears ever rave?

Thou dripping-jawed monster,
See, see how life haunts her
In the ghosts of the seven dead children she gave!
Thou hast left this world black for me —
Give, give my dead back to me!
Ah, grant the cold kiss that my withered lips crave.

O thou treacherous, passionate sea!
Insatiable, hungry-mouthed sea!

THE GREATER LOVE

HE stood as some Apollo crowned
In strength of limb and grace of head.
His beauty was a thrall that bound,
His beauty was her wine and bread.
“All love in beauty lies,” she said.

She bowed before that man’s desire,
The gifts love asked were not denied;
Her life flamed up with all that fire
That first love grants in greatest tide.
“Ah, love is joy, all joy !” she cried.

A child lay ill upon her breast,
She felt in fear life’s lessening ties,
Uprose and labored without rest,
And then she knew wherein love lies:
Her greatest love was sacrifice.

FATE AND I

“**T**HINE the fault, not mine!” I cried,
Brooding bitterly;
And Fate looked grim and once again
Closed in and grappled me.

“Mine, not thine, the fault,” I said,
Discerning verity;
And Fate arose and clasped my hand
And made a man of me.

THE TRYST

GONE — he is gone!
And here I stand and watch his moonlit way,
As if this silent silver thread might lead him back to me.
Gone, engulfed by that last hungry shadow
Where the tapering pines blot out the trail.
Gone — and yet, how he lives within me still!

He lives, he lives!
'Tis he, this breath of God that steals across my soul,
This surging joy that floods my frightened heart,
This warm soft touch upon my brow and hair,
This burning chrism of love divine
That lives as nectar on my lips.

'Tis he! 'Tis he!
Gone — and yet he still abides with me!

A FRIEND

HE shared his every pleasure,
Gave all great-heartedly;
And yet I felt some treasure
Was still denied to me —

Something I could not borrow;
Something he would not lend;
Until he shared his sorrow.
Then — then he was a friend.

STARWARD

DESPAIR?

How can a deathless soul despair?
Though measureless thy depths of woe,
Though never yet man fell so low,
There still remains one breath for prayer,
The will to strive, to rise again,
To purge thy stain before all men,
To reach star heights though still ye plod.
Then, brother, list and place belief in this,
Though unbelievable:
No ill stands irremediable,
No sin stands irretrievable
Before the eyes of God.

THOUGH THY FOE BE UNCONQUERABLE
DEATH

FIGHT, though the whole world oppose thee.
Fight, though the grim heartless strife
Withhold the one crown that it owes thee,
The joy that might laurel thy life.
Yet fight!

In the sting of the taking and giving,
In the blood that oft blindeth thy sight,
In the rising through failure lies living,
The living that triumphs through fight.
So fight!

Fight, though each dawn grow no brighter,
And, fallen, the end summoneth,
For a victory lies for the fighter
Beyond the cold glory of death.
Then fight, fight, *fight!*

KINGS

YEA, all this world thy kingdom is,
And thou thyself its crowned king.
Are not seas, stars, and peoples his
Whose soul is royal in conquering?

Thy mind and soul stand limitless,
In thee the kingly greatness lies,
As thou thy part, just more or less,
Of this vast life can realize.

Then know thy world and thou shalt see
That worlds on worlds are ever thine,
And know thyself and it shall be
To thee a heritage divine.

Take, take with eager, hungry hand
The greater life the mind can bring.
Take, take, and thou shalt understand
That thou thyself art king!

THE JOY OF THE ROAD

OH, the joy of the road, the joy of the road!
Wild joy of tramping free!
A windy sky, —
Great clouds scud by,
And the joy of the world's in me!

Oh, my road is aflame with the joy of the dawn!
It glows with the gold of noon
And leads at night
Through shadowed light
To the heart of the argent moon.

Oh, I know not where my road began,
Its end no man can see;
Enough, there's sun
And a song begun
And this joy of the road in me!

TO THE U. S. CRUISER CALIFORNIA

GODSPEED our namesake cruiser,
Godspeed till the echoes cease!
'Fore all may the nation choose her
To speak her will for peace;

That she in the hour of battle
Her western fangs may show,
That from her broadsides' rattle
A listening world may know —

She's more than a fighting vessel,
More than mere moving steel,
More than a hull to wrestle
With the currents at her keel;

That she bodies a living spirit,
The spirit of a state,
A people's strength and merit,
Their hope, their love, their fate.

She bodies their soul of fire
For justice, truth, and right,
And speaks their fierce desire
When God decrees to fight.

CHILDREN OF THE SHADOW

She carries their adoration
Where'er o'er seas she fares,
The love and pride of the nation
Whose sacred name she bears.

May the war gods ne'er refuse her
First place in the battle's van.
Godspeed our namesake cruiser,
Godspeed her every man!

(Read at the presentation of the State's silver service to the
cruiser *California* on May 8, 1908.)

FIRE AND SMOKE

OH, the pungent odor of burning brush!
How all my youth in one uprush
Is conjured back by the fragrant leaves
Of pine and eucalyptus trees!

A barefoot boy in a wonder world,
Where fire dragons lie encurled
In the gardener's flames that hiss and dance
And die at the thrust of my wooden lance;

Or, Crusoe-like, on desert isle
I touch my match to a sea-drift pile,
To thwart the murderous cannibal
Of a toothsome small boy festival.

Stealing into the vacant lot
We roast potatoes, piping hot,
Black as coals, hard at the core —
But oh, the savory taste they bore!

Desperate now, as buccaneer,
We overhaul a privateer,
Drag off its treasure chest with toil,
And by our fire divide the spoil.

CHILDREN OF THE SHADOW

And when we tire of that romance,
Like Indians ringed around in dance,
We vault the coals with whooping note,
With tear-filled eyes and choking throat,

Making more real the wild refrain,
Till the neighbors vow us all insane.
Oh, the poignant, palpitant sense of joy
In fire and smoke to the heart of a boy!

WHO KNOWS?

I LEFT a maiden in a far land
Where the orange blossom blows.
Did she weep perhaps at parting,
Did she fear that our sweet-hearting
All was drawing to a close?
Ah, who knows, who knows?

I left a maiden in that south land
Where the pomegranate grows.
Did she chide the fate, I wonder,
That has cast us far asunder,
Like the seeds a storm wind blows?
Ah, who knows, who knows?

I left a maiden in that sun land,
Where the white-belled yucca grows.
Can it be she, too, is yearning
Even now for my returning
To her land of sunset glows?
Ah, who knows, who knows?

ONE WAY

A SUN-RAY once kissed the young lips of a rose,
And she blushed to a burning red.
He begged for another from dawn to day's close,
And she gave him her heart instead.

A maiden I know with rose-petaled lips
That tempt one a kiss to impart;
But in loving a man so easily slips, —
Would it prove a wise path to her heart?

MOTHER NIGHT

ALL earth is her bosom given,
Her hills my pillows are,
Her mother face all heaven,
Her eyes in every star.

With soft warm winds she sings me
A lullaby that chants,
And the deep child sleep she brings me
Falls from the kiss she grants.

AS THE WINDS WILL

ALL heaven was clear that day,
Of clearest springtime blue.
My life laughed with the May,
When love came true.

But now, the year forestalled,
All days are gray and dead;
My life is winter thrall'd,
For love hath fled.

ALMA MATER

TO thee, O California,
To thee we pledge again,
Great-hearted, kindly mother,
Mother of stalwart men.

As soldiers home from warfare
Greet her who gave them birth,
Who armed and bade them battle
To prove their name and worth,

So we return, O Mother,
Bearing in gratitude
Life's glory spoils to laurel
Thy generous motherhood.

One in our love and honor,
One in our praise of thee,
As one we stand together,
Pledged for thy victory.

O Mother of Wisdom,
O Mother of Light,
To-night we salute thee,
To-morrow we fight.

(Read at the reunion of the class of '99, Nov. 12, 1909)

THE FOUR WINDS

I COME from the sapphire flocs of the north,
I shout as my whitening blasts are unfurled,
I mantle the mountains till each tree stands forth
A glory of silver and laces, empearled.

Stern father am I, a law to the world.

I come from the east, from the portals of dawn,
I've swept the broad sea of its shadows of night,
My word from its opaline wave crests is drawn,
A chant of sea strength, a song of sea might.

Thy brother am I, a bringer of light.

In the dreamy luxuriant south I take birth,
Its rich tangled lowlands by me are caressed;
I fold to my heart vast love of the earth,
I garner its meadow blooms close to my breast.

Thy mother am I, a mother of rest.

I come from the crimson-tongued embers of day,
Of redolent pines and the prairie grass rife;
I laugh and I sing on my passionate way,
I glory in power, I glory in strife.

Thy lover am I, the breath of thy life.

THE CHILD FROM THE MILL

I AM tired, mother, tired.

Oh, I ache for night's release
From this whirr and grinding clatter —
Night's starlit, dreamless peace.

Is ever life so bitter

To those who serve the right?
Does ever moneyed justice
End master in the fight?

I am tired, mother, tired.

Thy kiss shall numb my pain,
Thine arm-enfolding slumber
Shall right my world again.

“MINE THE BURDEN”

THE new Pope from his matins rose
And sought that ancient garden close
Where flowering earth for a lowly span
Gives breath to the high-piled Vatican.

His new attendants stood aside,
Deeming they knew what thoughts must bide
Within the mind that here made store
Of all the wealth his office bore;

How he must glory in the sway
That crowned him spirit sun of day,
Keeper and king of heaven's key,
Sovereign of Catholic empery.

But see what sights his eye engage,
As now he halts before a cage
Where wilding birds of plumage rare
A close-barred garden prison share.

He calls a guard. “Throw ope the bars!
Give them the freedom of the stars.”
Then, turning, wistfully walks away,
And only a servant hears him say:

“MINE THE BURDEN”

“I shrink not from Thy labor, Lord;
Mine the burden, cross or sword.
But not these birds, — I only am
Prisoner in Thy Vatican.”

DESERT SLEEP

FROM far across the desert a stray coyote calls,
Its mate in echo answers, and then a stillness falls
That is the soul of silence, the breathlessness of night,
The shadow of a spirit that is the Infinite.

A warm sage-scented wind breathes drowsily of rest,
Strange golden-sanded vistas, half dream, grow manifest.
Now comes a sense of vastness, of earth, of stars, of sea,
And from the heart of heaven, night's benedicite.

THE CALLING

LIST! it is a wild dove calling,
Calling from the camphor tree.
Now from out the lower woodland
Hear love's answer distantly.

List! the winds of spring are calling,
Whispering through the osier wands,
Breathing words of life and promise,
And the soul of spring responds.

Listen, love, my heart is calling,
Calling as that woodland dove.
Has thy heart no word of answer
To the song, "I love, I love"?

THE MIRACLE

“**I** KNOW Thou canst,” the cripple cried in prayer.
“O God, Thou canst! Thy spirit everywhere
In wondrous works Thy glory doth attest.
In me a miracle make manifest!
One breath, O God, to consecrate this soul,
One word, one touch to make this body whole.”

Unmoved in mystic silence God remained,
And yet his faith the cripple still retained.
“Thou canst, O God, I know Thou canst!” and then,
To prove God’s might and power unto men,
That cripple rose and walked erect and well.
So God through man had wrought his miracle.

LOVE IS A STAR

LOVE is a star,
Whose rosy beam
Raises our eyes above this earth
To glimpse a heaven of golden dream.
Love is a star.

Love is a rose,
Whose petaled soul
Opes to the breath of her sun love's kiss,
Gives of her life and gives it whole.
Love is a rose.

Love is the dawn,
Whose arrowed ray
Pierces the shrouded veils of night,
Rose-floods the world and leaves night day.
Love is the dawn,

Yet love is still more —
Worlds more than this.
Can dawn or the rose the infinite tell?
Can even the star foretoken thy kiss?
Nay, Love, thou art more!

THE MAD SINGER

OUT of the dusks of evening came
A roadside beggar, blind and lame.
Fumbling his cap, he paused before
Three guests who dined by a tavern door,
Men full blessed of fortune's dower,

Masters of wealth, of name, of power.
Now, why that beggar, I can't surmise,
Fixed just these three with his sightless eyes.
He waited their silence. Then in strong
And piercing voice began this song:

*"Hear me, stranger, hear me sing,
Happy in my suffering.
Blind am I and yet I see
The roots of all thy poverty.*

*"Knowest thou not that naught thou art
But pulsing blood in thy brother's heart?
Give that blood. The world hath need
Of flowers from thy heart's red seed.*

*"Give thy cloak and rise new dressed
In robes that poverty hath blessed.
Give thyself, thy heart, thy soul,
And live the life of all men, whole.*

THE MAD SINGER

*"Seest thou not that man to live
Must often die? to have, must give?
Hear me, stranger, hear me sing,
And help this world's dark suffering."*

"A madman's song! Was ever heard,"
Said one rich man, "such words absurd?"
"The wanton fool!" another cried;
"Were wild words truth, yet still he lied.
Here, keeper, put this vagrant out!
Shall meals be spoiled by a crazy lout?"
Beaten and cursed and set upon,
Adown the night the beggar's gone.

'Tis strange, but now their evening meat
Has lost all taste, their wine its sweet.
Ease and joy had taken flight
With a wandering clown. And as that night
Each man went home beneath the moon,
He heard in the wind that beggar loon —
Wild words that echoing burned his brain,
Ever rewailing in weird refrain:

*"Hear me, stranger, hear me sing,
And help this world's dark suffering.
Blind am I and yet I see
The root of all thy poverty."*

THE WORLD IN ITS BLINDNESS

THE blind world sees him pass,
Weak and wan and ill;
It sees the pain he has,
Knows not his inner 'will.

It sees but the spirit's mesh,
Its dark and cankerous dole,
Knows not that this scarred flesh
Marks the triumph of a soul.

THE ORIENT DAWN'S FIRST SHADOW

THE orient dawn's first shadow
Has rimmed the desert sky,
And tides of roseate amber
Now deepen, fade, and die.

The lark has left the mesa
And ripples out his song,
A mad ecstatic greeting,
Full-throated, clear, and strong.

The hills in drowsy twilight
Are fairy hills of dream,
Where sprites and elves are dancing
In day's fast fading beam.

High stands the jeweled Corona,
Haloed at heaven's crest,
While Scorpio, ruby gleaming,
Wheels slowly to the west.

The dawn, the stars, the mountain,
Each speaks the god-will true;
And ever their soul of beauty
Quickens my thought to you.

WORK !

WORK! though no master bless thee
With the gold of a great reward.
Work! though the yoke oppress thee
And thy true worth be ignored.

For in work lies thy life's salvation,
And thy pain shall pass away
In the joy of a god's creation,
In the peace of a workman's day.

TOO BRIEF THE DAY

(Upon the death of a child)

LIKE to a tear of purest dew
Born to a petaled blossom,
For one brief day, dear spirit, you
Lay nestled on my bosom.

And, like that pearl, too fair to stay,
Too frail for life's noon hour,
The great sun bore your soul away —
And left this drooping flower.

UNCROWNED DAYS

I HELD love's jewel within my hand,
Its pricelessness was absolute.
Then envious fate an ambush planned,
And robbed and left me destitute.

Yet rich am I in poverty,
My wooden cup a goblet gold,
These beggar raiments that you see
No servile beggar soul enfold.

For still her heart is all my own,
And though possession be denied,
In thought and love of her alone
My uncrowned days are justified.

FELLOW FAITH

THEY cried his shame upon the public street,
Their fellowman who had a trust betrayed.
Alone he stood before the judgment seat
And heard their verdict, that his life unmade.
All save one. One there was who kept
A faith beyond the crime, who heard and wept.

Ten years the branding stripes burned deep their shame,
Crushed out his faith in man and God. The end,
Revenge and anarchy. Then forth he came,
To find at prison door that one true friend;
And lo! this faith of one gave back again
A sin-purged soul to God, a man to men.

EARTH'S BLOSSOMS DIE

THE bubble on the fountain breaks,
Each flower fades and dies;
The sable night too soon o'ertakes
The gold of westering skies.

E'en so thy love. I thought, dear heart,
'Twas wrought of finer breath,
Contrived of some immortal art
Beyond the grasp of death.

And still the sunlit bubbles break,
In dust earth's blossoms lie;
Yet why, O God, must love forsake
The arms of love and die!

IN GOD'S WINE PRESS

ALONE she left her low Carpathian hills,
Where tyrant law its tyrant wrong fulfills,
Where feudal taxes and the dreaded knout
Combine to crush the peasant life blood out;
As she in autumn crushed the purple grape,
Leaving no orb, no cluster to escape
The naked feet in the dark-stained vats. For years
Had she the gnarled vines pruned; with hopes and fears
Had hoarded till the tollgate pittance grew
Sufficient, — a copper purse that would, she knew,
Free her at last, bear her beyond the sea
Unto her life's one goal of liberty.

They passed her rudely with a rabble horde
Of babel-tongued companions. Without a word
She sat and saw her visioned bliss
In freedom's million-mouthed metropolis.
But honest labor for an honest hand
She asked of all this treasure-yielding land;
Merely the chance, her rightful opportunity,
To sing, to work, to live in liberty.
But tongue was halting and her speech came thick,
Her peasant brain foresaw no undertrick

CHILDREN OF THE SHADOW

When smooth-voiced sons of liberty approached
And of a golden store of earning broached.
For she was deep of bosom, good to see,
With her peasant eyes of childish purity.

They led her through a land, broad, rich, and fair,
Unto a city's red-lamped depths, and there
They left her to — Ah, God! the life of shame
Unspeakable. Ensnared, she soon became
Enmanacled by crime, without redress,
Downthrust and crushed in life's ensanguined press —
Crushed as 'neath the naked feet of God,
Until her soul's blood, oozing, stained the sod
Of all the land with shame, she fell so low.

Crushed by life? by fate? by God? Ah, no!
By *us*, her fellowmen, so smug and free
Within our vaunted land of liberty.

THE LIFE-JOY

OH, the breath of life is good!
This sun and air I drink,
These hills I look upon,
These stars that quivering sink
Into the day that's gone,
They stir the laggard blood
With breath of brotherhood,
And life, I cry, is good!
Is good!

SONGS OF YOSEMITE

A MASTER CALLS

The Merced River

FROM the proud granite crests of the world,
Where winter's drift silver is furled,
 The sun grants me being,
 My frozen soul freeing, —
A watersprite valleyward hurled.

And straightway I gather new might,
As I race in tempestuous flight,
 Ceaselessly pouring
 A thunderous roaring
That echoes through day and through night;

Now over the glacier-carved walls,
From heights that my wild soul enthalls,
 In mid air outleaping,
 With cloud mists outsweeping,
And rainbows that halo my falls.

The lush mountain meadows I lave,
Their emerald with crystal I pave,
 As laughingly swirling
 I'm fretting and purling
Their marge with my white lapping wave.

CHILDREN OF THE SHADOW

On, on through a granite-walled gorge,
In anger its boulders I scourge,
 Now grinding and churning
 Its bed at my turning,
I lash and I leap and I surge.

What spirit impetuous fills
My wild being? What god ever wills
 This crashing and bounding,
 This endless resounding,
That rings through the great granite hills?

Ever down to an unknown home,
From heavens unknown I come.
 Ah, why this mad seething,
 Eternally wreathing
These flowers of silvery foam?

Why I go, what I am or shall be?
For a river there's naught but the sea.
 Some master is calling,
 And I, ever falling,
Know only my soul would be free.

CLOUD MIST

Yosemite Falls

A BURST of molten silver, born
Of mountain snow,
That bears the beauty of the morn
Within its flow.

A wave of streaming white that falls,
And, falling, flings
Against the gray old granite walls
Its silver wings.

A whitened fire from out the sky,
Whose arrowed strands
In sunlight gleam and flash and die,
Like earth-hurled brands.

A rush, as surges of the sea,
That, dashing, wakes
Dull echoes of a musketry
Where'er it breaks.

A river turned to cloud mist, blown
By every breath,
Yet coming to its crystal own,
After death.

WILD WATERS

Nevada Falls

LIKE outburst volcanic
Of forces titanic
She flings her white storm flood far forth on the air;
A body stupendous,
Some wild thing tremendous,
That leaps like a beast from its high mountain lair.

In white anger breaking,
Her drenched mane outshaking,
She roars as she pours down a thunder cloud doom;
A furious leaping,
Her flanks ever steeping
With froth of her spray drift, enfanged with her spume.

Beneath, a wild boiling,
Blind surging and roiling,
Mad glory of power, mad glory of might;
Wild frenzy of forces
Fresh burst from their sources,
White blood of the mountains in unbridled flight.

TRAIL SONG

THEN it's ho! for the pack
On the dusty track
And ho! for the roadside rills.
A song for the trail
Through gorge and swale,
That leads to the giant hills.

Up! Storm the heights
Where first dawn lights
And vales where nothing stills
The thundering call
Of stream and fall
In the heart of the giant hills.

Breathe deep their air
So clear and rare,
Breathe deep the joy that thrills.
Though muscles ache,
No steep forsake, —
There's strength in the giant hills.

And oh! the rest
On the mountain's crest
When night the day fulfills,
Beneath a pine,
Where great stars shine,
Asleep in the giant hills.

CHILDREN OF THE SHADOW

Then up and sing
Till rock-walls ring
And echo heaven fills!
A wild heigh-ho
To the vale below!
Life sings in the giant hills!

SHADOWED SPLENDOR

Mirror Lake

A REACH of shadowed splendor in the silence of
the dawn,
Of purity transcendent,
Holding earth and heaven pendant
Within a mystic mirror as breathless as the morn.

Vision of mountain beauty, deep-shadowed, motionless,
A jewel in granite setting,
A soul in dream forgetting
Its power of enchantment, its depths of loveliness;

Spirit of sleeping waters, how like man's soul thou art!
Touched of earth about thee,
Colored of life without thee,
Yet holding this gleam of heaven within thine inner heart.

SPIRIT HEIGHTS

The Valley Walls by Moonlight

TOO great, too grand in fearful majesty,
These valley walls that shut the heavens out.
They crush with heartless over-strength and flout
The pettiness of man's mortality;
Immense, colossal, vast,
Rude mountain strength upmassed.
Within their scarred and furrowed front is writ
That life of brutal strength which knows no law
Beyond a greater force, — Time's storms that split
The heart of stone, or ledge and crevice gnaw —
A tale of heartless strife,
This world's material life.

So before the all-revealing light of day
They stand. But now day fades, with failing breath
Day dies; and night shrouds all with glooms of death,
Blots out these signs of strife in death's kind way,
And final word now says
In awful silences.
But lo, a flood of silver lucence creeps
A-down the night and bodies forth in light,
From source unseen, these self-same valley steeps;
Transmutes each granite cliff to marble height,
And purges with its kiss
Each grim stained precipice.

SPIRIT HEIGHTS

The same in massive shape and mighty line
And towering form of splendid majesty
They stand, yet veiled in tides of mystery —
Pale tides that bathe in their ethereal wine

Each starry-arrased edge,

Each pine-enshadowed ledge.

Great spirit masses now they gently fade,
Form on form. With all God's world in tune
They rest, softened, silvered, overlaid
With vestal raiments of the virgin moon;

Drenched in a silence white

And pure as their own light.

O life divine! O soul of the finer soul!

What if, at last, when night's great shadow falls,
Thou shouldst stand forth like yonder spirit walls,
The truth of spirit shining through the corporal whole,

In every line and shelf

Thyself and not thyself;

The worn stained vesture of this world, unseen
In the truer light that, from some distant sphere,
Shall bare the soul from all its flesh terrene,
And let, at last, in light divine appear

The deathless personality, —

Thyself, thy soul now free

In simple spirit majesty.

SEED DRIFT

WEALTH

GIVE of thyself. Man's wealth depends,
Not on the pence he holds and hoards,
Not on the gift he well affords,
But on the spirit-gold he spends.

THE BREAD AND THE WINE

GOD took the gleaming goblet of the day
And filled it with the star-shine wine of night;
Man drank of beauty's sacramental light,
Saw life in all, and found new words to pray.

NOW

WOULDST thou the master of time's ages be,
Live now. Put all thy soul into the act
Of this one moment — now. With life compact,
For thee this instant means eternity.

CHRISTMAS STARS

THE Christmas stars are dancing,
A-thrill with ecstasy.
A world-joy all entrancing,
Christ-love men's lives enhancing
Uplifts humanity:
And the Christmas stars are dancing,
A-thrill with ecstasy.

THE LEAVEN

LABOR is thy daily bread,
And love the needed leaven
That through the heavy years is spread,
To lift thy life to heaven.

THE SPARK

LIKE flint the world to him remained,
But his will was tempered steel,
And in life's forging fires he gained
The joy that masters feel.

A WOMAN TO HER HAND-MIRROR

(Suggested by a French song of the 14th century)

AM I — tell me — am I fair?
Youth were wont in other days
These eyes, these lips, this brow to praise,
And all this wealth of golden hair.
Yet now — ah, tell me, am I fair?

THE MASSES

THEIR dull ears hear the truth in vain,
Their minds in mists are furled;
But speak unto the hearts of men
And thou shalt move the world.

SONG—BIRTH

A VAGRANT phantom caught,
Its gossamer soul a thought
That glows with meaning marvelous;
Glow until it wakes
In haloed light and takes
New form and beauty luminous.
Wild seed of fancy's throng,
It bursts a flowering song.

A WOMAN SPEAKS

I OFFER, Fate, my all to thee,
This name, these jewels, great property,
And beg one boon — no other.
Life's final goal and joy for me
Lies in this heart-born hope to be
A lover and a mother.

VISION

THE fibre of man's life is wrought
In what he strives to see,
In image of his highest thought: —
Just so his God shall be.

THE MARTYR

THE while they bound his arms he calmly said,
“Alive a man hath little strength, but dead,
The might of millions. Wait! By this decree
Thy victor — not thy victim — I shall be!”

MATERNITY

SHE felt the soft warm hands' caress,
The lips in hunger steal,
And knew a love and tenderness
That man can never feel.

THE LIFE-LOVE

IBOW beneath a blood-stained rod,
In bitter anguish cry,
And yet, for love of life, O God,
Behold, I would not die!

FROM THE SHADOW

“**H**E who suffers sees a world
Beyond his fellows’ ken,
As one from some dark cave of earth
Sees stars unseen by men.

NO

“**N**O!” he said, and none then knew
The sacrifice it meant,
Nor how a soul to greatness grew
Through this relinquishment.

O NOW, MY HEART

STRANGE hungry shadows run
Gray ghosts my path along;
And yet, my day's not done —
Be strong, my heart, be strong!

Strange night is creeping down,
Darkening wave on wave.
Will dawn these shadows crown?
O now, my heart, be brave,
Be brave!

DAWN

THE silent, slumbering world lies dark entombed by
night,
Yet morn arises from that tomb in beauty rife.
So dawns another day, so dawns another life:
Out of the dusks of this shall come the Greater Light.

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